

Congressman Jesse Jackson, Jr., today said, "Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is scheduled to meet with the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) tomorrow afternoon. At that meeting I will challenge the incompetence of the Bush Administration's State Department and its Secretary in getting 25,000 Americans out of Lebanon in an orderly and timely fashion. The performance of the Bush Administration in Lebanon is matched only by the Bush Administration's incompetence in rescuing the victims of Katrina.

"All other governments in the world seem to have thought about and put in place a rescue plan for their citizens. Only the United States has shown such incompetence.

"It's an outrage that so little thought and planning had been done by the Bush Administration in anticipation of what they would do with Americans in Lebanon should something, such as the current crisis, manifest itself.

"All of this from an administration that failed to follow-up properly on UN Resolution 1559 (2004), which demanded from a weak government in Lebanon that it disband and disarm all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militia from Lebanon - with no outside help. Hezbollah, gathered in southern Lebanon, is stronger than the government of Lebanon, yet the United States did not lead the United Nations in offering practical military help for Lebanon to achieve this goal. At the same time the U.S. forced Syria, which had a large degree of control over Hezbollah, to leave Lebanon.

"We are now confronted with a crisis that should have been anticipated from the beginning given the lack of action by the Bush State Department," Jackson concluded.